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ABSTRACT

The trend in Scandinavia is to broaden teacher education and training for academic secondary school teachers in order to overcome excessive specialization. The context of apprenticeship of pre-school, primary teachers is changing toward a more academically oriented program. However, the affective part of the learning/teaching process is becoming more recognized. Recent developments in the Scandinavian educational system are explored. These reforms include moving pedagogical training from autonomous colleges of education into universities proper. Moreover, a newly recognized need for more effective teaching and the results of research in the learning process have made Europeans in general more aware of the training aspect of teacher education. (JD)

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TEACHER EDUCATION IN SCANDINAVIA

Henry Wasser

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Abstract - Teacher Education in Scandinavia

By Henry Wasser

The trend in Scandinavia is to broaden teacher education and training for academic secondary school teachers in order to overcome excessive specialization. The context of apprenticeship of pre-school, primary teachers is changing toward the academic. Yet the affective pact of the learning/teaching process is becoming more recognized.

Teacher Education in Scandinavia
By Henry Wasser

European countries distinguish carefully between teacher education and teacher training. The influential Lord James report for the British Department of Education and Science two decades ago pointed out the inadequacy that arises from an "overdependence upon initial training as distinct from continued education and training and from an unhelpful distinction between two kinds of training: one route for graduates and another for non-graduates."

It identified three cycles that education and training fall into: (1) personal education (2) pre-service training and induction (3) in-service education and training. In Great Britain education and training are combined in the convenient courses offered in colleges of education and in the education departments of the polytechnics but not in the universities.

Scandinavian countries had followed this pattern, but the great reform in Sweden of 1968 and 1977, for example, resulted in the merger of the College of Education in Malmö with the University of Lund. In Norway the previously independent colleges of education were merged with other post-secondary units like district colleges, school of dramatic arts and school of technology to form a regional higher education unit (non-university).

In the first instance resistance existed on both sides - universities resented employing faculty not oriented toward research and the lowering of standards and colleges of education complained of losing autonomy, modifying initial objectives and being subordinate to the university. In the second instance the merger of post-secondary, non-university units into regional colleges in Norway aroused hostility in the universities when this new organizational unit competed for research funds from the Ministry and in the regional colleges when the universities attempted to deny validity of their degrees equal to those in the universities. Teacher colleges of education were uncertain

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that they had gained in the development. On the one hand they were equated to district colleges (similar to American community colleges) and on the other the conglomerate institution with its size and diversity appeared to have gained strength with the national budget makers.

At present, most European universities contemplate moving pedagogical training into universities proper from formerly autonomous colleges of education or institutes of pedagogy while some American universities consider moving toward the old European system, i.e. university education with a subject major and then a semester of pedagogical training after graduation before the student enters secondary school teaching. These trends reflect the inadequacies of the respective educational systems. Europeans decry the lack of knowledge of the teaching/learning process, and Americans lament repetitive methods of teaching and the absence of knowledge among those being employed in the schools.

Moreover, until recently the European universities were expanding and university openings were available for those who in previous years would have qualified themselves to teach in the gymnasium or lycee. Now the general shrinkage in number of teachers needed* and recognition that the newly admitted (as a result of widened access) need more effective teaching plus the results of research in the learning process have made Europeans more aware of the need for the training aspect of preparation of teachers. Americans are more alert to the lack of content/knowledge in the preparation of the high school teachers and move toward education in the university and pedagogical training afterwards. So the midpoint between the two modes of teacher preparation changes, and the distance between the two processes shortens.

* The large supply of graduates, their demand to be employed and the problems in the schools under the existing pupil-teacher ratios for a period of time led Scandinavian governments to employ more teachers than otherwise would have been expected. In this way some improvement was made possible in schools and certain deliberations about cutting back the number of teachers came to a halt temporarily.

As we turn to a brief consideration of the developments in Scandinavia, we find Sweden bulking largest in educational changes. But first to Norway where the enrollment in teacher training colleges has slowly increased from 11,100 in 1975 - 17% of total post-secondary education to 13,700 in 1980 - 19% of total post-secondary education. In 1980 the Ministry of Education introduced a national first degree awarded after four years of study in which students can include courses from several higher education institutions, colleges as well as universities. This degree has mainly resulted from broadening transfer options between the short term institutions and the universities. Some teacher training colleges also offer a higher degree after six years. Women students in teacher training colleges rose from 64% in the total enrollment in 1975 to 71% in 1980.

Some observers doubt the independence of regional boards or colleges of education and believe that teacher training colleges are still strongly influenced by a central advisory council directly responsible to the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, changes have occurred. Teacher training colleges offer university courses, compete for research resources from the appropriate research councils, and are subject to "academic drift", i.e. aping universities in curricula, research and status.

Next, to Finland where without giving a comprehensive survey, one may state that the following job descriptions could serve for all Scandinavian teachers.

Kindergarten teachers work at day-care centers (developed most effectively in Scandinavia) and similar institutions as teachers and educators of pre-school age children.

Class teachers teach all subjects in the curriculum of the lower level of the compulsory comprehensive school.

Subject teachers usually teach one or two subjects at the upper level of the compulsory comprehensive school, in certain cases also at the lower level.

Special teachers give instruction to children suffering from speech, reading, writing or other special problems in the comprehensive school or in special classes or schools for children with severe learning and adjustment problems.

Student counselors work at the upper level of the comprehensive school and in post-compulsory upper school; teachers of vocational and academic subjects, as well as workshop teachers, function as student counselors in vocational education institutions.

In 1984-85 only 3.5% of teaching posts were filled by unqualified teachers while 1-2% of teachers were registered as unemployed. The manpower situation is continuously monitored by independent studies and by the Teacher Education Council, a consultative body at The Ministry of Education. There are regional differences in manpower shortages. Over-representation of women in the profession is kept under control by a 40% quota reserved for men in enrollment.

Research on teacher training and teacher's work is primarily carried out by the faculties of education and by the Center for Educational Research of the University of Jyväskäla (commissioned in part by the Ministry of Education and National Board of General Education). About 10% of all research projects on education deal with teachers and their work (esp. selection procedures, curricula, teacher's conception of self and duties and work-load).

Women make up some 60% of the comprehensive and upper secondary school teachers and some 30%-40% of those in vocational institutions and higher education.

The number of places in class teacher and subject teacher education is decided by the Ministry of Education. Openings in teacher education make up about 1/4th of the total enrollment in institutions of higher education.

Teacher education has not been exempt from overall education reform in Sweden. Since 1977 all higher education in one place has been brought together

in a single administrative unit called högskola. This means, for instance, that the University of Lund includes the Lund Institute of Technology, the Malmö College of Music and the Malmö School of Education, which, however, claims that its needs for a specific identity and the special character of its mission require separation from the University. The Board of the university, nevertheless, states its conviction that the assets of the comprehensive university are such that it should not be broken up. Stockholm has four such units and Gothenburg, two.

In 1977 all positions were divided by the Ministry into five broad occupational groups: 1. science and technology 2. administration 3. medical and welfare services 4. educational services 5. cultural and information services. The planning goals of the U68 commission were asserted to be development of personality, private and social welfare, democracy, internationalization, and social change. Teacher education and training were altered by the adoption of these categories and objectives.

The inquiry into teacher education was begun by a national commission in 1974 which reported in 1979. The appropriate compulsory/post-compulsory model of schooling had to be developed in accord with the 1977 reform. However, the commission's proposals for a teacher qualified to teach throughout grundskolan but not beyond it have been cooly received by those now qualified to teach their subject specializations to students from 13 to 19 years of age.

There is no formal link between pre-school and compulsory school - indeed pre-school is still the responsibility of the social welfare services, not education, even though its teachers are trained under the auspices of the education ministry.

Stiff competition exists for places in programs in class teaching of younger children which are now just as selective as medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science.

Institutions of higher education are very much "adult" centers. While in total about 30% of the intake is aged over 24, this applies to only 14% in the technological field to as many as 54% in the welfare services and to 50% in teaching. The chart for autumn term intake in 1979 with age distribution by field of study shows for those over 24: Technology - 14+%, Teaching - 56+%, Administration - 31+%, Welfare - 54+%, Culture - 33+%.

In the profession itself, Sweden among Western nations has done perhaps the most in terms of organizing manpower planning for teachers. For many countries the development of teacher education in the early 1970's has been used as an argument for the impossibility or at least undesirability of manpower planning in higher education. In fact the relatively modest surplus of teachers in the early 1970's was planned in Sweden. Unemployment only exceptionally occurred among fully educated teachers. Rather, problems arose largely when aspiring teachers graduated from the faculties with "open" admission in which the numbers of students planning to embark upon a teacher's career could not be controlled.

Historically, teacher training institutions were characterized as non-academic institutions as contrasted to academic institutions (universities). Non-academic institutions did not formally require upper-secondary school certificates. In time, however, such institutions as those offering training for teachers at the primary level came to require it in practice.

During the 1950's and 1960's the distinction between the two sectors began to blur. The non-academic organizations grew as a result of deliberate policy by central government to boost this sector in order to alleviate the pressure of expansion on the university. An example of this policy was the extension of state study assistance in 1965 to cover all post-secondary education on equal terms - earlier the academic sector had been favored in this respect.

Moreover, the most recent and increasingly forceful policy since 1977 aimed at a single comprehensive system of post-secondary in order to reduce differences in status, modeled upon the previous reform making secondary eduction comprehensive, and in accord with the requirements of national planning.*

The trend in Scandinavia is to broaden teacher education and training for academic secondary school teachers in order to overcome traditionally excessive specialization. Although they, aware of educational technology and transmitters of knowledge, remain closer to university than to pre-school, primary teachers. At the same time the previous character of apprenticeship of these instructors is becoming more academic. Yet it can be said that the meta-academic nature of all teacher education transcending the academic disciplines and merging the cognitive and the affective appears to be altering education and training of teachers at all levels of the school system.

* There are in Sweden six colleges of education and nine other post-secondary units that have research facilities and train secondary school teachers - this latter group must take a university degree before they can join college of education. To all intents and purposes then fifteen colleges of education exist with six having a double status, offering both university and non-university education.

There are fourteen schools for pre-school teachers and eight other primary teacher-training schools.

Appendix

The present Swedish government favors the regional spread of teacher education training and changing the traditional three levels of teachers for the school system - compulsory, gymnasium, grundskole - to two with broadly trained and educated grundskole teachers prepared to teach several subjects at that level. The three deeply entrenched teacher unions rigorously fought this latter proposal. However, the Riksdag decided to proceed with the change.

There continues a shortage of fully qualified teachers, but there is not a shortage of teachers in general; indeed supply still exceeds demands for general teaching jobs.

Social democracy in Scandinavian countries favors decentralization as well as regionalization. The merger movement in Norway was encouraged by local social democratic council and parliament members, who also were suspicious of elitism and education for the socially advantaged in the universities. Consequently they pushed for increased funds for teacher training and other post-secondary institutes at the expense of universities. On the other hand, conservatives favored centralization and universities as the proper recipients of research money and habitat for the education of future decision-makers. Paradoxically social democrats, to institute far-reaching reform in higher education in such a country as Sweden, moved to centralization as most effective implementation strategy for the bureaucracy necessary to bring about nationwide reform. In reaction, conservatives supported regional and individual resistance to nationally bureaucratically designed school and higher education reform initiated by social democracy.